

Atari
News
& Views
SEPT. 1988

HACK NEWS

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Atari
Computer
Klub

NEWSROOM ARRIVES

NEWSROOM is finally here. This product of Springboard Software may be the most versatile desktop publishing program ever released for the 8-bit Atari. With it you can create good looking double-column newsletters on 8.5 X 11 inch or 8.5 X 14 inch paper. With the built-in graphics editor you may create "pictures" to include in the newsletter or, with one of the available "CLIP-ART" disks you can choose an already created picture. There are four CLIP-ART disks available from Springboard which gives you almost 2000 different pictures to choose from. The letter head of this newsletter was created using two of the CLIP-ART pictures. They are cartoonish but nicely done.

Five fonts are available - Serif large or small, SanSerif large or small, and Old English large. The large fonts are used to create headlines or headings while the small fonts are used for the main body of text. Scale is fixed. You have no choice as to text size other than when the font is first chosen. You also cannot change fonts. Text is entered in discrete panels and you can have two different fonts nly if one is large and one is of the small variety. This is a small sacrifice given the good readability of the included fonts. However, entering the text is another matter entirely.

Text is entered in one of two different editing windows. BANNERS is used to create letterheads and you may have one per page. The main body of the newsletter is entered using the COPY DESK into 1/8 page panels, or 1/10 page panels for 8.5 X 14 inch paper. You may have one banner and 6 (or 8) panels or 8 (or 10) panels without a banner. You may put as many pictures as possible into each banner or panel and the entered text will automatically word-wrap around the picture...up to a point. Entering pictures into the panels is more involved than entering them into a banner, much more so.

Entering text and pictures into the panels is NEWS ROOM's biggest problem. To enter a picture you must first go into a program called THE PHOTO LAB. From there you choose a picture from a CLIP-ART or data disk, you then define the borders of the picture. Once you have done that you must then "take a photo" by pointing the cursor to a little camera-like icon. Once that is done, you must save the photograph to a data disk and then go back to the main menu and load the COPY-DESK program. Then you choose a photo to add to your panel. This doesn't really take much effort but it does require a lot of disk swapping for a one drive system. Also, photos cannot be scaled. They never depart from the size of the original CLIP-ART picture.

Now you must enter text. The text editor built into NEWSROOM must be the slowest in the known universe. Its features are very spartan. You have word-wrap, which sometimes breaks a word off in the wrong place, and little else. The standard Atari keyboard editor is disabled. You cannot delete a letter or word except by moving the cursor to wherever the mistake is and then hitting the RETURN key until it scrolls off the bottom of the editor window. Once it scrolls off it's gone. Everything is in the insert mode - you can't get into a type-over mode because there isn't one. You can't delete by back-spacing either. All-in-all, the text editor is very slow but usable.

NEWS ROOM works. It produces a nicely formatted and attractive newsletter, if you exercise some restraint in its use. However, because its text editor is so terribly slow and lack scaling capabilities, I must give it a reluctant "THUMBS DOWN." If you must use a program of this type then I suggest that you use NEWS STATION by Reeves Software or TYPESETTER by XLEnt Software. They are both much faster and just as versatile. Better yet-use a good word processor and DOT-MAGIC or DAISY-DOT II and just use NEWS ROOM for making the letterhead banners.

RANDOM NOTES

This issue marks my retirement as your newsletter editor and the beginning of a nine month departure from the Home Atari Computer Klub. I'll be taking night classes from late September until early April. That, together with job obligations will prevent me from participating in any active HACK activities for those many months. I've been a member of the club for 2 1/2 years. It seems like such a short time.

Dave Taylor will be taking over the duties of newsletter editor. Dave has been busy learning the ropes and I think that he will be a more than capable replacement. Please give him your support and your articles.

I do not know who will be taking over as HACK secretary. Any volunteers?

The SLOWPOKE BBS, which I have been SYSOPing since July, will continue. I am determined to keep it going as long as I get even a few callers. Remember that the SLOWPOKE was originally started up because you, the HACK membership and assorted members of the local Atari community stated that you wanted your own club BBS. It now supports both the 8-bits and the ST with good PD software and message bases. Callers have been pretty far between, however. Won't those of you with modems give your club BBS a try?

I have finally seen the Atari Mega 4 ST and the Atari Laser Printer in action. I must say right off that I was greatly impressed. The Mega is a very nice machine but is basically just a souped-up ST with 4 megs of RAM. The Laser Printer was very quiet and its output quality was outstanding. I must also state flatly that I was surprised in the throughput speed of the printer. It was not the slug that many rumors had stated it to be. It seemed faster than the \$3500 Apple Laser-Writer II that I sometimes use at work and its output quality was at least as good, if not better. The Atari uses a second-generation laser engine with very dark and clear output. Blacks were black and not dark gray as is the case with some laser printers. It looks like Atari has a winner on its hands. Lets hope that it catches on with the small business market that Atari is aiming it at. As for the average personal computer user? The Mega and Laser Printer combination will set you back about \$3500. That's not bad at all considering that a MAC SE and Laser-Writer II will cost a cool \$5000+. And you 520 and 1040ST owners can use the Laser Printer, too. All you need to do is upgrade your ST to at least 2.5 meg.

At the current going rate for the RAM chips and upgrade board that will set you back about \$700, if you install the upgrade yourself. OUCH! Still, much cheaper than most of the competition. Just remember, potential buyer, that you can get really good output from a \$300 impact dot-matrix printer and virtual laser-quality from the new \$900 HP DeskJet Printer. (I have also played with the HP. My impressions? IT'S FANTASTIC.)

TRAMIEL SPEAKS

TO ALL ATARI USER GROUPS AND ALL ATARI ENTHUSIASTS:

I was disappointed to read the negative letters and articles regarding comments made by Neil Harris at the West Coast Computer Faire. We at Atari feel that our computers are the clear technological leaders in their classes. The XE/XL line is superior to the Commodore 64, and the ST beats any '286 or 8088 MSDOS machine; it also beats the touted Macintosh (68000) machines, and even surpasses the Amiga in all areas except for internal sound.

The educational, productivity, and entertainment software available for the Atari machines makes for an excellent combination which yields many uses. My family knows, as we use an 800XL, an XE Game Machine, and a 1040ST. Neil was only saying that the future will bring EVEN MORE POWERFUL computers which will be easier to use, and I am sure he is right. This statement was not meant to belittle today's models or users.

While I am communicating with you, let me clear up a few things and also ask for your help. The DRAM shortage is still with us and it is inhibiting our distribution in the U.S. We hope this will get better in the 4th quarter of '88. In the meantime, WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT ATARI COMPUTER presence in the U.S. We will advertise this fall to keep our presence in the U.S. I ask all of you two things: first, please do not pirate software. Talk your friends out of it also. The software community is suffering and complaining, please police pirating so Atari software companies can thrive. The other favor I ask of you is to be the evangelists of the Atari world. Tell your friends, associates, teachers, etc., how great the XE/XL and ST are. LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO MAKE THE ATARI MACHINES A STANDARD IN THE U.S.

--Sam Tramiel, President
Atari Corporation

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NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, October 12 @ 7:00 PM
Salem Public Library
AV Conference Room

CLASSIFIED ADS:

FOR SALE: CHICAGO COIN GUNSMOKE GAME.
Two-player mechanical pinball in
excellent condition. \$250. Ken Romig
at 588-0483 after 5pm.

ART8888 Interface with 64K. Use your
8-bit with generic disk drives and
printers. Will run CP/M! Excellent
condition. \$150. Jerry Isaac at
623-8260 (Dallas)

CALLERS WANTED! The POPCORN SCHOOL 885
supports Atari! Call 585-9595. Hours
are Fri. - Sun. from 7pm to Midnight.

LOCAL BBS NUMBERS

SALEM/PORTLAND AREA

The following Salem and Portland area
Bulletin Board Systems and Public
Domain Software Exchanges all support
the 8-bit Atari, the ST, or both. Many
support other computers as well.

BOARD	Phone #	supports
SLOWPOKE 885	585-8793	Atari
POPCORN SCHOOL	585-9595	Atari
Renegade 1	390-3811	Many types
SPL #1	588-6130	All
SPL #2	588-6881	All
Beilke's	370-7615	All
CINDERELLA	399-9861	Atari
ACE (Eugene)	1-343-4352	Atari
PAC 1 (Ptld)	1-245-9485	Atari
PAC 2 (Ptld)	1-238-7130	Atari
Q-Meg (Ptld)	1-667-2242	Atari +
Atarian (Ptld)	1-245-9730	ST
IBBS (Ptld)	1-292-1321	ST

All of the above listed BBSs are
available for your use. Some are semi-
private but are easy to register onto.
All others are public boards, open to
anyone with a modem.

The Salem Public Library has an
online catalog open to the general
public. You can call as long as you
have a 1200 baud capable modem AND a
VT100 or ADS Viewpoint emulator. There
are 4 numbers: 399-5259 399-5260
399-5261 399-5261

The password is CCRL5.

Software Pipeline™

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